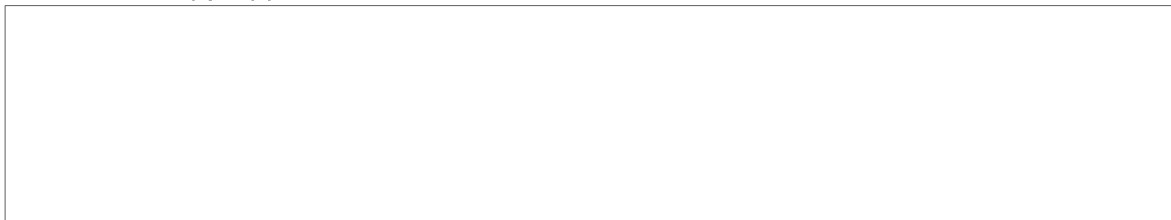


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Ways of Reducing the Times for Bringing Troops
to Full Combat Readiness
(Based on the experience of the Baltic Military District)
by
General-Leytenant M. Ivanov

The most favorable conditions for bringing troops to full combat readiness will be during a threat period, even if only of short duration, during the course of which all necessary measures can be taken in sequence. However, to count on such a period in all cases is to commit an irreparable mistake.

In our view the most difficult condition will be the kind when the troops of the border military districts are being brought to full combat readiness with the simultaneous onset of war.

In view of the importance of this question, much work is being conducted among the troops of the district on shortening the time of fulfilling such basic elements of combat readiness as the warning, assembly, preparation, and moving out of troops and combat equipment, the moving out of mobile reserves of supplies from places of permanent deployment, and the deployment of rocket forces for delivery of the initial nuclear strike. Naturally all these steps are regarded as an integrated, inseparable process directed at preservation of the survivability of the ground forces during possible enemy nuclear strikes and at organized entry into battle in the initial period of war.

Warning of troops and staffs is effected by means of a semiautomatic warning system utilizing T/O&E and specially developed radiotelegraph and telephone communications equipment as well as various types of sound and light signalling equipment. This system consists of control consoles mounted in the rooms of the operations duty officers, illuminated indicator boards in communications centers (with display of signals), equipment for collective-call warning of the officer personnel through the city automatic telephone system, selector devices for warning duty officers in directorates and departments of staffs, and a series of other improved devices, sound and light signalling equipment, etc. Thanks to this, warning staffs and troops at the military district-division level takes three to five minutes, and the signal reaches down to subunits, units, and

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installations in eight to ten minutes.

Shortening of the time has also been achieved by the presence in the military district headquarters of a non-T/O group of permanent operations duty officers who know their duties and the warning system to perfection.

Ways of further improving the warning system should, it is evident, be sought in wider automation of its basic procedures at all tactical and operational levels, so as to eliminate the multistep process which still exists in a number of garrisons. The time is ripe to move from prototypes of automatic warning systems to their centralized mass production and introduction into service with troops, since a great amount of money is being spent on the manufacture and further improvement of semiautomatic systems in military districts, and delayed introduction of automatic equipment leads to unwarranted expenses.

Industry-manufactured automatic warning systems based on radio and radioelectronic means should ensure simultaneous warning of all command levels for two or three levels down, automatic confirmation of the reception of the signal received, warning of the officer personnel in their quarters and of the troops located outside military posts, and general (military district, army) warning and autonomous (garrison) warning.

It is absolutely necessary to connect into this system the control posts deployed under field conditions, which will permit operational staffs to take on the control of troops from the indicated posts more quickly.

We consider that with the introduction of an automatic warning system it is necessary to have in large staffs T/O groups (sections) of four to six operations duty officers. Practice shows that the available semiautomatic system produced by the forces and means of the troops makes great demands not only on the operational but also on the technical training of duty officers.

Many years' experience testifies to the fact that operational staffs are often compelled to stay at points of permanent deployment for lack of timely readiness for operation of the communications centers of control posts, which take much time to set up. If a front communications center is going to be moved 25-30 kilometers from the permanent deployment point of the military district staff, its moving out, setting up, and establishment of communications requires up to seven to eight hours. Obtaining radio communications is possible within an hour after setting up the communications center, but the absence of secure communications equipment

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hampers troop control. Another limiting factor is telegraph communications since they require no less than six or seven hours from the moment of the sending of a combat alert signal just to obtain plain text channels and one hour to make them secure.

This situation is explained not only by the imperfection of the means of communications, but also by the extremely limited quantity of secure communications equipment, which in addition requires high-quality communications channels. Practically speaking, only the main links from stationary communications centers and a portion of the main links from field communications centers can be provided for by the available secure communications equipment.

The insufficient quantity of secure communications equipment can to some degree be compensated for by using available coding machines by setting up coding posts, but the tables of organization do not provide for the personnel and corresponding specialists to work in them, therefore these machines are not, as a rule, fully utilized.

Much time goes into linking up the operating rooms of communications centers, especially into adjusting and tuning the complex equipment, and the secure communications equipment, because of the low personnel strength of the special T/O teams. Obviously it is necessary to bring the tables of organization of communications units into conformity with the requirements of existing equipment.

It is impossible not to notice that many of the indicated inadequacies result from the technical capabilities of existing means of communications. They require further improvement and the establishment of more effective, small-size, simple to handle models. What ways do we see to solve this problem? First of all, in the rapid equipping of the troops with radio and radio-relay channel secure communications equipment capable of ensuring live conversation under any conditions. Secondly, in simplifying the passing of correspondence in communications centers (by introducing duplicating equipment) and the registering of documents in receiving points and dispatching centers. Third, in working out the linking of the operating rooms of communications centers with command-staff vehicles.

And finally, it is advisable to reexamine the T/O structure of communications units with the object of building up their engineer-technical personnel and specialists in secure communications equipment. In other words, it is essential to bring the organization of communications troops into conformity with the existing and planned

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communications equipment. Communications equipment has changed significantly, but the organization of communications troops has basically remained at the level where it was at the end of World War II.

Upon placing the troops of a border military district on combat alert the main attention should be concentrated first of all on bringing the rocket forces, aviation, air defense means and ground forces to full combat readiness. This will permit timely delivery of the initial nuclear strike and maximum exploitation of its results to complete the destruction of the enemy in a short time.

Deployment of rocket troops. We fully support the proposals made on this question in the article of Colonel General of Artillery G. Kariofilli.* In addition to them we would like to dwell on the following.

Experience of exercises shows that even with indirect indications of enemy preparation to deliver strikes, missile and missile technical units should be brought to a state of increased combat readiness. When bringing the ground forces to this state of readiness, it is necessary to bring the missile units and, above all, the missile technical units to full combat readiness. This will allow us to gain five to six hours in the preparation of missiles and warheads.

At the present time, in practical work the timetable for technological preparation of missiles is being thoroughly examined. In accordance with it, the sequence of preparation of the booster missiles and warheads has been changed, the functional duties within crews and assembly brigades have been reallocated, and the intensity of labor has been somewhat increased. Introduction of this timetable into practice in the work of mobile missile technical bases allows, as experience has shown, reducing the check-out and preparation time of missiles by 1.5 to two times. This significantly reduces the time for bringing the rocket troops to full combat readiness.

Another very important means of destroying the enemy is front aviation. Practice shows that shortening the time of bringing it to full combat readiness depends above all on its speedy movement out from under possible enemy strikes, since its basing will already be known to him in peacetime, and consequently airfields will be under constant threat of a strike. Naturally, aviation is the most vulnerable target of all the means for employing nuclear weapons which a military district (front) has at its disposal.

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From the onset of war the success of the combat operations of aviation and the preservation of its forces will be determined by its timely and concealed movement to alternate airfields. Hence, the most effective way to achieve high combat readiness and security for aviation is maximum dispersal of its basing (two to three airfields per air regiment) and the establishment of a sufficient number of concealed alternate airfields in peacetime.

Inasmuch as the reception of aviation during rebasing or after a combat sortie at unprepared airfields is impossible or extremely difficult, it is advisable, especially in wintertime, to maintain the dispersal airfields in constant readiness. It is necessary to establish at them in advance reserves of materiel as well as the appropriate engineer-technical equipment to support the combat operations of the aviation.

In the interests of further development of an airfield network, there should be prepared in peacetime widened sections on existing highways (suitable for combat operations of jet aviation), and airstrip sections should be provided for on all newly constructed highways as well.

The correct, well-thought-out maintenance of combat equipment has great significance in shortening the time to bring large units and units to combat readiness.

On the basis of work conducted with the troops of the military district, a series of technical improvements was introduced that permitted significant reduction of the completion time of certain operations for bringing equipment to readiness and obtained good results in shortening the overall time of bringing troops to combat readiness.

It is known that delivering storage batteries to tanks and installing them is a very laborious process that requires the expenditure of a large amount of time. This has an especially adverse effect in large units with reduced personnel strength. Therefore, in units in constant readiness but with reduced personnel strength, we maintain the entire tank park (except for tanks in long-term "Cocoon" storage) with installed batteries, switching them to continuous battery charging with low currents. This makes it possible to sharply reduce the time for starting up the vehicles from five or six hours to half an hour. Besides this, the method indicated permits a significantly smaller expenditure of time and effort on the servicing of storage batteries, lightens the physical labor of crews, and above all establishes conditions for maintaining tanks in a high degree of combat readiness at any time of year. Also contributing to this is the

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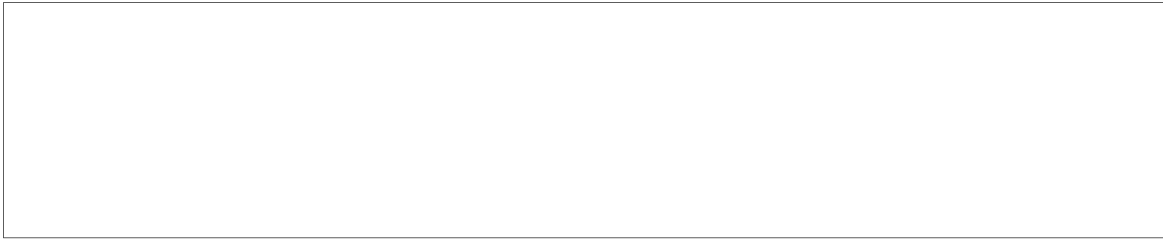
introduction in units with reduced personnel strength of special equipment for quick filling of the tanks with liquid coolant and oil, as well as the permanent mounting on the tanks of the removable part of the equipment for underwater driving (OPVT).

It should be said that the implementation of the above-mentioned measures, plus well-thought-out equipping of parking areas with battery-powered emergency lighting, gas exhaust venting attachments, and light signalling to permit giving commands to mechanic-drivers during the moving of tanks out of the park, as well as the preserving of armament and equipment of the emergency reserves with the application of inhibiting paper, synthetic sheeting, and multipurpose lubricants, all make it possible to bring armament and combat equipment to combat readiness significantly faster.

Solution of the technical problems enumerated is only one aspect facilitating bringing troops rapidly to combat readiness. Another very important aspect is the loading up and moving out of mobile reserves of materiel and technical means. Although the jobs are to some degree mechanized with the use of roller conveyers, conveyors, dollies, overhead rails, and narrow gauge railways, which allow shortening the time twofold or threefold and significantly reducing the number of personnel allotted to carry them out, this still has not solved the problem of moving out mobile reserves at the same time as the moving out of combat units from places of permanent deployment. Obviously, given the present organizational structure and technical equipping of troops, the best way of solving this problem is to keep mobile reserves of ammunition and POL permanently on organic combat and transport vehicles. As concerns rations, clothing, and medical supplies, they should also be stored in vehicles or in special packaging (containers) in prepackaged form.

Such a system of storing mobile reserves has been implemented in practice among the troops of our military district since it ensures their moving out rapidly, excludes the involvement of large numbers of men in loading and the necessity of allotting means to the mechanization of loading operations, and in the final analysis sharply reduces the time for bringing troops to full combat readiness.

A few words about monitoring. A check of the combat readiness of units and large units is, as is known, most often timed to coincide with the conduct of various exercises. However, experience shows that such checks do not give a complete picture of the true state of combat readiness. Troops preparing for exercises know to some degree or another



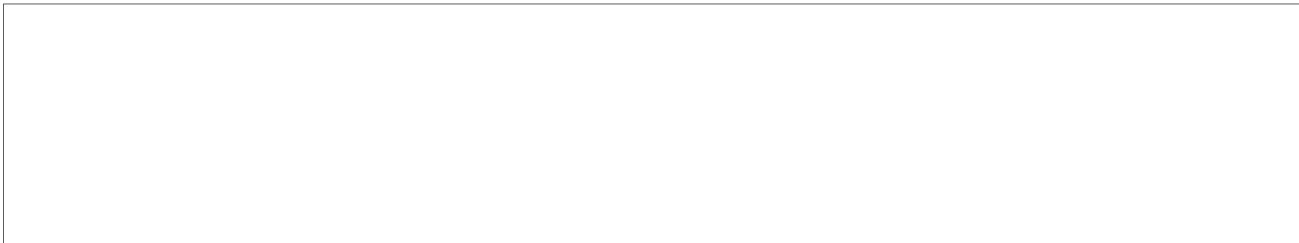
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in advance, to what they should pay attention in order to register good time. Under such conditions results achieved when an alert is signalled are significantly higher than the performances troops give during a surprise check. Besides that, during surprise checks it is possible to discover more accurately the true state of combat readiness of any particular large unit or unit and correctly determine ways to shorten the time.

All the above ways of shortening the time are unthinkable without a good level of training and a high state of political consciousness and morale of troops and staff personnel. Not one undertaking, even a well planned one, will come out successfully if those who carry it out do not treat its fulfilment with a sense of high responsibility and diligence. High military discipline, a spirit of collectivism, and industry take on enormous significance in this.

The several ways stated to reduce the time periods for bringing the troops of a military district to full combat readiness are not exhaustive. For this reason, we are carrying on with the work of further research on this important matter.

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